in the vulnerable pockets of the population has not shown a spread of the disease in epidemic proportions.

(b) and (c) According to available data collected by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, the number of persons reported to have been infected and died due to Viral Hepatitis (all types) during the last three years is given below :-

Year	No. of Persons infected	No. of Persons died
1994	98880	1183
1995	98940	943
1996	116031	799

(d) and (e) No vaccine is available for the treatment of Hepatitis. The vaccine for prevention of Hepatitis-'B' is available commercially in the market. Steps have been taken to encourage indigenous production and permission for commercial production has also been accorded to an indigenous manufacturer recently. Initiating a programme for vaccination against Hepatitis-'B' would depend on the availability of additional resources as the present outlays are inadequate for taking up such a programme.

Following measures are being taken to prevent viral Hepatitis :

(i) Screening for Hepatitis-'B' is mandatory for all blood donations.

(ii) Awareness building for promoting safe sex has been undertaken.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued for the use of a separate sterile syringe and needle for each injection.

(iv) Directions have been given for the immunisation of Central Government hospital personnel, who are at high risk, against Hepatitis-'B'.

State Governments have also been advised to take similar steps.

(v) Intensive Health Education measures have been promoted inter-alia conveying message for use of safe drinking water and maintenance of environmental sanitation.

[English]

Satellite Usages

*314. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have ended state monopoly on satellite usage and ownership by allowing private firms to use INSAT transponders and permitting them to own satellites;

(b) if so, the rationale behind this decision;

(c) the commercial terms likely to be offered to non-Governmental users subject to capacity availability; and

(d) the manner in which the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) will facilitate allocation of frequencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) and (b) Satellites are used extensively for telephony, data, T.V. and Sound broadcasting and Mobile Services. Satellite Communications systems have become a fundamental infrastructure of the communications network in the country and hence needs to be properly regulated for orderly growth. Further, Indian Satellite Systems have to comply with the various United Nation and International Telecommunications Union treaties and other international agreements to which India is a Party. With this in view, the Government has decided upon a policy framework for satellite communications in India. The salient features of this policy are; (a) transponder capacity on Indian National Satellite (INSAT) system would be offered to non-Governmental users also on commercial terms subject to capacity availability; (b) Indian private parties will be permitted to establish commercial communication satellites and the parties will be assisted in registering such satellite systems and networks with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) as Indian Satellites; and (c) operations from Indian soil will be allowed with both Indian and foreign satellites in accordance with the norms and conditions to be evolved, but Indian satellites will be accorded preferential treatment. In so far as satellite based broadcasting is concerned, the various provisions of the Satellite Communications policy framework would conform to the proposed Broadcasting Law. It is expected that the enunciation of the policy framework will lead to the development of a healthy and thriving communications satellite and ground equipment industry as well as satellite communications service industry in India. This will also open the INSAT system for wider usage.

(c) and (d) Provision of capacity for Broadcasting purposes will conform to the proposed Broadcasting Law. INSAT capacity is already being made available on a commercial basis to licensed private VSAT service providers and Closed User Groups through the Department of Telecommunications. A licensed VSAT service provider also gets to use the frequency at which the transponder operates.

The annual space-segment charge for one full extended C-band transponder of 36 MHz bandwith and 34 dBW satellite Equivalent Isotropic Radiated Power (EIRP) is Rs. 275 lakhs at present. The space-segment is kept reserved on pre-emptive basis from the date of

signing the licence agreement and payment of space segment reservation charges @ 25% of annual space segment rental charges on the date of signing the licence agreement. The spot frequnecy is allotted after following the established procedure of Standing Advisory Committee for Frequency Allocation (SACFA) and INSAT Network Operation and Contral Centre (NOCC).

[Translation]

Banned Medicines

*315. SHRI MANOJ KUMAR SINHA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that some banned medicines including 'Queena Crine' are again being used as contraceptive in major cities of the country;

(b) if so, the number of complaints received by this Government in this regard: and

(c) the details thereof and the action taken by the Government so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) to (c) No banned contraceptive is allowed to be used in the country. The drug Quinacrine is not a baned drug as it was never introduced in the country. The Indian Council for Medical Research had initiated limited trials in 1993 with due approvals which were discontinued in the year 1994 when trials on 8 selected women indicated an unacceptable failure rate for prevention of pregnancy. Recently it was reported in the press that the drug was administered by some doctors/agencies in Calcutta, Delhi and Bangalore. In three cases which were enquired into, it has been reported that the drug is not in use at present. Investigations on the use of Quinacrine are continuing and action as considered necessary would be taken to protect the interests of consumers.

[English]

Peace Treaty with Pakistan

*316. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indo-Pakistan people's forum has urged both the countires to sign a peace treaty to mark the Golden Jubilee of Independence of both the countries;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the dialogue is proposed to be resumed in the matter; and

(d) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Government are committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan peacefully, through bilateral discussions as envisaged in the Simla Agreement. The Joint Statement issued in Islamabad on 23rd June, 1997, on the conclusion of the second round of resumed Foreign Secretary level talks, identified the various issues to be disussed between the two countries and established a mechanism under which these discussions would take place. The Joint Statement also prescribed that the next round of talks would be held in Delhi in September, 1997. Government are committed to establishing a relationship of trust, friendship and cooperation wth Pakistan.

Trade with Myanmar

*317. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government of Mizoram approached the Union Government for reopening border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh along river and surface routes;

(b) if so, Union Government's reaction to these proposals;

(c) whether the Government have made an adequate survey to assess the growth potential of trade and tourism for this land-locked State; and

(d) if so, the concrete steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir. Government have received requests from Government of Mizoram for reopening border trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh through land routes from Champhai and Demagiri respectively.

(b) Government have approached the Government of Myanmar for opening of Border trade through the Champhai-Rih route. The Government of Myanmar, have not agreed to operationalising this route for border trade at present, mainly on the grounds that adequate infrastructural facilities are not available. In case of Bangladesh, the Government of Mizoram had proposed border trade through Demagiri. Government have conveyed to Bangladesh their interest in reopening border trade inter alia from Mizoram and other states in the north-east of the country. During the 5th Indo-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission held in March 1997, the two sides decided to set up a Group of Experts to make recommendations by the end of 1997 for operationalisation of the arrangements for border trade between the two countries.